

Message Text

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TO USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

USMISSION GENEVA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 066681

NODIS

GENEVA FOR USSALTTWO

FOLLOWING REPEAT BONN 4660 ACTION SECSTATE MAR 14.

QUOTE: S E C R E T BONN 4660

NODIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE REPEAT TO USNATO, LONDON,
PARIS, AND GENEVA (USSALTTWO)

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PARM MNUC NATO GW

SUBJECT: ERW: FURTHER ALLIANCE CONSULTATIONS

REFS: (A) BONN 4659 ; (B) BONN 4548; (C) STATE 63404;
(D) BONN 4477; (E) STATE 61674; (F) STATE 38172

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BEGIN SUMMARY. THE FRG WILL PROPOSE A TRADE-OFF OF
TANKS FOR THE ERW AT THE MARCH 20 NAC CONSULTATION.
STATING THAT FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER HAD RECALLED HIS
CONVERSATION OF FEBRUARY 12 WITH SECRETARY VANCE (IN
WHICH BOTH SS-20 AND SOVIET TANKS WERE DISCUSSED AS
POSSIBLE OPTIONS), STATE SECRETARY VAN WELL TOLD THE

CHARGE THAT THE FRG OF COURSE RECOGNIZED THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF THE SS-20. HE REITERATED THAT THE OVER-RIDING GERMAN CONSIDERATION WAS REACHING AN EARLY NATO CONSENSUS, AND HE LEFT THE IMPRESSION THAT, HAVING MADE THEIR CASE FOR A TANK LINKAGE (WHICH HE SPECIFIED WOULD NOT BE IN AN MBFR CONTEXT), THE GERMANS WOULD NOT CONTINUE TO ARGUE AGAINST THE SS-20 IF THERE WERE OTHERWISE A CONSENSUS IN FAVOR OF IT. HE THOUGHT IT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE TO CONCLUDE THE MATTER AT THE TWO NAC SESSIONS SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 20 AND 23. THE GERMANS ARE CONSIDERING GETTING THEIR REPLY TO THE BREZHNEV LETTER OUT OF THE WAY BEFORE THE NATO POSITION IS MADE KNOWN. END SUMMARY.

1. VAN WELL ASKED THE CHARGE TO COME IN LATE THIS AFTERNOON (MARCH 14), STATING THAT FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER HAD ASKED THAT HE LET US KNOW THE PRESENT STATE OF FRG PREPARATIONS FOR NAC CONSULTATIONS ON THE ERW ISSUE. AT THE OUTSET, HE STATED THAT GENSCHER HAD ASKED THAT THE CHARGE TRANSMIT HIS BEST WISHES TO SECRETARY VANCE AND TO STATE THAT HE RECALLED, AS HE WAS SURE THE SECRETARY DID, THEIR DISCUSSIONS OF THIS ISSUE DURING THEIR LAST MEETING (REF F).

2. VAN WELL CONTINUED THAT, AT TODAY'S FEDERAL SECURITY COUNCIL (FSC) MEETING, BOTH THE SUBSTANCE AND THE PROCEDURE FOR THE NAC CONSULTATIONS HAD BEEN
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DISCUSSED EXTENSIVELY. THE FRG UNDERSTOOD THAT THE USG STRONGLY FAVORED THE SS-20 AS THE ARMS CONTROL OPTION. THE FRG, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAD VERY MUCH FOCUSED ON THE TANK OPTION, FOR VARIOUS REASONS. THE ERW HAD BEEN DEVELOPED IN THE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM AS A COUNTER TO THE WARSAW PACT TANK SUPERIORITY, WHICH WAS A VERY THREATENING ELEMENT IN THE EQUATION AND WAS ALSO VERY MUCH IN THE PUBLIC CONSCIOUSNESS. IN ADDITION, BASED ON WHAT BUNDESTAG MEMBERS WERE SAYING PUBLICLY, IT APPEARED THAT A TANK LINKAGE WOULD BE A VERY CONVINCING PROPOSITION.

3. THE FRG WOULD, THEREFORE, PRESENT THE TANK OPTION IN THE MARCH 20 NAC MEETING, DISCUSSING BOTH THE PROS AND CONS. VAN WELL ADDED THAT THE FSC HAD DECIDED NOT TO SUGGEST AN MBFR LINKAGE BUT WOULD ASK THAT AN ERW/ TANK TRADE BE DEALT WITH OUTSIDE MBFR AS A SPECIFIC NEGOTIATION. THE FRG DID NOT YET HAVE ANY DETAILS TO PROPOSE; QUESTIONS OF HOW MANY TANKS, THEIR LOCATION, AND WHAT WAS TO BE DONE WITH THEM WOULD HAVE TO BE WORKED OUT.

4. THE FRG PREFERENCE FOR A TANK OPTION, VAN WELL CONTINUED, DID NOT BELITTLE GERMAN CONCERNS OVER THE DISPARITY IN MEDIUM-RANGE SYSTEMS AND THE SS-20 THREAT. THEIR CONCERNS ON THAT SCORE HAD FREQUENTLY BEEN EXPRESSED DURING DISCUSSIONS OF GRAY ZONES IN THE SALT CONTEXT AND WOULD BE REITERATED IN CONNECTION WITH THE NAC CONSULTATIONS ON ERW. THIS MEANT, HE SAID, THAT THE FRG ALSO SAW THE ADVANTAGES OF THE SS-20 OPTION.

5. VAN WELL SAID THAT THE LAST THING THE FRG WANTED WAS A STAND-OFF AND THAT THERE WOULD BE NO CONFRONTATION BETWEEN US AND FRG VIEWS. THE OVERRIDING GERMAN CONSIDERATION WAS TO REACH A RAPID NATO CONSENSUS,
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AND THE GERMAN DECISION WOULD BE MADE ON THE BASIS OF WHAT WOULD BEST ASSURE A CONSENSUS.

6. THE CHARGE ASKED WHETHER THERE WAS NOT A DANGER THAT REACHING A CONSENSUS WOULD BE A LONG DRAWN-OUT PROCESS. VAN WELL REPLIED THAT, ON THE CONTRARY, HE FULLY EXPECTED THE MATTER MIGHT BE SETTLED IN THE TWO NAC SESSIONS PLANNED FOR MARCH 20 AND 23. HE REITERATED THAT, WHILE THE FRG WAS REQUIRED TO MAKE ITS CASE, IT WOULD NOT WISH TO DRAG THE MATTER OUT. IN RESPONSE TO THE CHARGE'S SUGGESTION THAT ALLIES WHO WISH TO AVOID AN EARLY DECISION MIGHT SEIZE ON THE TANK VS. SS-20 DEBATE AS A MEANS OF PROLONGING THE MATTER INDEFINITELY, VAN WELL STATED THAT HE DID NOT THINK ANYONE WAS INTERESTED IN DOING SO. WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE NETHERLANDS, HE STATED ON THE BASIS OF A RECENT CONVERSATION WITH THE DUTCH AMBASSADOR THAT HE THOUGHT THEY WOULD GO ALONG WITH THE IDEA OF MAKING AN ARMS CONTROL PROPOSAL AND WOULD NOT WRECK THE CONSENSUS ON THE THREE ELEMENTS OF THE US APPROACH.

7. WITH REGARD TO PROCEDURE, VAN WELL SAID THE GERMAN PRESENTATION ON MARCH 20 WOULD BE ON THE BASIS OF THE JANUARY 20 FSC DECISION CONCERNING WHICH HE HAD PREVIOUSLY INFORMED THE US. THE FRG WOULD THUS GO ALONG WITH THE US THREE-TIER PROPOSAL, IN ACCORDANCE WITH WHICH THERE WOULD BE AN EXPRESSION OF A NATO CONSENSUS TAKING NOTE OF THE NATIONAL US DECISION TO PRODUCE THE ERW, ENDORSING THE ARMS CONTROL OFFER, AND LOOKING TO INITIAL DEPLOYMENT IN EUROPE IN ABOUT TWO YEARS IF ARMS CONTROL FAILS.

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8. VAN WELL SAID THE FRG WOULD LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING THE US DRAFT CONSENSUS STATEMENT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE STATEMENT WOULD FOLLOW AS CLOSELY AS POSSIBLE THE SUBSTANCE OF OUR PROPOSAL AS SUMMARIZED IN PARA 6 OF REF (E) (WITH INCLUSION OF THE REFERENCE TO TWO YEARS).

9. VAN WELL THOUGHT THE SPECIFIC FORM OF THE CONSENSUS STATEMENT -- WHETHER A COMMUNIQUE OR A LUNS SUMMATION -- COULD BE DECIDED AS A TACTICAL MATTER DURING THE NAC CONSULTATIONS. HE THOUGHT THE US APPROACH WAS A SENSIBLE ONE IN AVOIDING THE NECESSITY FOR INDIVIDUAL COMMITMENTS. WHILE THE FRG WOULD MAKE A POSITIVE STATEMENT, HE THOUGHT OTHERS -- PARTICULAR THE DUTCH -- MIGHT NEED TO SIT SILENT.

10. VAN WELL SAID THE FSC HAD ALSO TAKEN UP THE QUESTION OF HOW TO RESPOND TO THE BREZHNEV LETTER. HE UNDERSTOOD, AND HAD INFORMED THE FSC, THAT THE US MIGHT BE PLANNING TO MAKE A COUNTERPROPOSAL TO THE SOVIETS IN THE US REPLY TO BREZHNEV. FOR THAT REASON, THE FRG WAS LEANING TOWARD SENDING ITS REPLY BEFORE A NATO STATEMENT WAS ISSUED SO THAT IT WOULD BE OUT OF THE WAY. THE REPLY WOULD BE BASED ON THE GENERAL ELEMENTS WHICH PAULS HAD PREVIOUSLY CIRCULATED IN NATO. MEEHAN
UNQUOTE VANCE

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